Negotiation Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 6:58 AM on Thursday, May 21, 2026.

Attendees:
-Sherri Horsager, Darin Anderson, Sarah Lerud, Buff Murray, Dallas Dockter, and Nicole Powers

-Others Attending: Superintendent Josh Johnson, Business Manager Jackie Cordie, Ryan Mathias, Tara Glandt, Rhonda Nudell, Cynthia Klabo, Brian Engelhard, Angela VanBruggen, Jess Gregerson, Kathy Lentz, Joelle Manlove, Jill Askin, Tedi Dimmer, Kristi Shanenko, Andrea Jensen, Wendy McDaniel, Cora Potts, Carina Roehrich, Jill Taylor, Tom Milbrandt, Ashley Kellogg, Phil Hatcher, Tonya Breckheimer, Jess Enstad, Harley Vavra, and Grant Kraft, ND United.

Approval of the Minutes:
-Motion: Murray motioned to approve the May 15, 2026, minutes.
-Second: Dockter seconded the motion.
-All voted in favor, motion carried.

Purpose of Meeting
-Counter Proposals and Discussion

Valley City Education Association Remarks and Counter Proposals (Lerud)

Lerud commented that the board came to previous negotiations with no movement on the compensation/salary and does not feel that this is good faith negotiations, also noting that the parties have met four times and that VCEA left the May 8th meeting expecting a movement on salary. Lerud also reviewed with the board negotiators the eight (8) or nine (9) accepted items and indicated they were mostly editorial or clean up changes.

- One-year contract (also proposed by the board)
- Adding PreK instead of just K
- Updating a NDCC reference number
- Adding the word principal and clarifying appropriate principle
- Deleting outdated language on not earning personal leave
- Removing "Professional Dues" from deductions
- Reducing the required printed copies from 15 to three
- Changing grievance voting the VCEA Executive Board only

Lerud noted that many of the board's language revisions were perceived as takeaways from the association's rights and from NDCC minimums.

-VCEA reviewed and overview the VCEA's items – tentative agreements and resubmitted (Lerud):

1. One year contract for 2026-27 – *Tentative Agreement*
2. Contract language – replace any K-12 with PK-12 – *Tentative Agreement*
3. Recognition – only change first paragraph per Board request to have a single term used throughout the agreement
4. Article I. Teacher Rights, Section 1, Rights and Protection in Representation, p.3 – update out of date NDCC references (remove 15.38.1 and update to 15.1-16) – *Tentative Agreement*

5. Article I. Teacher Rights, Section 3, Required Meetings or Hearings, p.3 – add Principal – *Tentative Agreement*
6. Article IV. Teacher Evaluation/Personnel Files, Section 1. Teacher Evaluation Document, p.6 – align language with current evaluation system (Marzano Evaluation System) & update language – *Resubmit – The policy says nothing about the evaluation tool or model that is used. This section in the negotiated agreement has explained the tool that is used. It used to be a document, and now it is Marzano. If we don't update it, then it is not accurate. A committee has been used to make these decisions as long as we can remember.*
7. Article V. Transfer, Section 2. Voluntary, p. 6 – update language and add appropriate Principals – *Tentative Agreement*
8. Article VI. Reduction/Recall Procedure, p 7-12 – *Tentative agreement to language changes that do not change the meaning of the sections after Sherri and Sarah's joint rewrite.*
9. Article V. Transfer, Section 3, Involuntary, p.7 – add seniority as the first determinant (keep references to elementary and JH/SH as they are currently structured) – *Withdraw*
10. Article VII. Teacher Workload, Section 3. School Term, p 13 – *Tentative Agreement to Board's request after Sherri and Sarah's joint rewrite*
11. Article VII. Teacher Workload, Section 6. Class Sizes, p 13 – add new language:
    a. PK-3 no more than 18 students
    b. Grades 4-8 no more than 22 students
    c. Grades 9-12 no more than 27 students

    Additional compensation if class size is greater than noted – *Resubmit*
12. Article VIII. Teacher Compensation, Section 2. Salary Base, p 13, 14 – establish a $40,000 base salary for 2026-27 and the Board to pay for the entire teacher share of TFFR – *Counterproposal – A salary base of $38,800 shall be established for the 2026-27 school year.*
    - *A. As part of this counterproposal and if the school board will withdraw their proposals about*
        - *Removing seniority as the first determinant in the RIF policy,*
        - *Grievance procedure changes,*

    VCEA will commit to working collaboratively next school year on
    1. language updates that do not change the meanings of the sections,
    2. to investigate alternative structures and create examples of salary schedules, including transition planning from the current structure to any new structures,
    3. extra-curricular pay,
    4. teacher workload.
    - *B. The committee shall consist of four (4) Association members chosen by VCEA , two (2) administrators, Superintendent, and a board member.*
    - *C. Timeline and Deadlines:*
        - *A. No later than October 1, 2026: Committee members shall be appointed and hold their first meeting.*
        - *B. By May1, 2027: The committee shall issue a preliminary progress report to both negotiation parties*
        - *C. January 15, 2028: The committee shall submit final mutually agreed-upon recommendations for contractual changes.*
    - *D. Resolution: The final recommendation shall serve as the baseline framework for negotiating a successor agreement to be implemented no later than the start of the 2028-29 school year. The committee's work is not binding on either party. VCEA needs to approve the agreement with its members, and the full School Board must approve the agreement.*

13. Article VIII. Teacher Compensation, Section 5. Miscellaneous Compensation B., I. p 14, 15 – remove language that states teachers shall not receive personal leave for time substitute teaching – *Tentative Agreement to I., Tentative Agreement to E. to Board's request and Sherri and Sarah's joint rewrite.*
14. Article VIII. Teacher Compensation, Section 7. Deductions, p. 16 – remove language about professional dues – *Tentative Agreement*
15. Article IX. Teacher Benefits – *Separate Handout *See attached**
16. Article X. Professional Leave, Section 2. North Dakota United President Leave, p. 22 – add North Dakota United President Leave – they will be granted a leave of absence without pay for the term of office – *Resubmit*
17. Article XII. Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 4. Copies, p. 24 – update the number of agreement copies to three (3) printed copies – *Tentative Agreement*
18. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 1. Grievance Definition, p. 25 – update language to add "or VCPS Policy" – *Withdraw*
19. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 5. Adjustment of Grievance, D., p. 27 – In the event the grievance is not resolved in Level III, Executive Board of the Association requests five (5) days to review the grievance and to vote by secret ballot to determine if the said grievance should be supported. The grievant may continue with the grievance even though the Association my elect not to support it, but the grievant will have to pay the cost of arbitration on their own.– *Tentative Agreement*
20. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 7. Denial of Grievance, p. 27 – change language so that if the Board does not issue a decision within the timeline, the grievance is treated as approved – *Withdraw*
21. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 8. Arbitration Procedures, C. Selection of Arbitrators, p. 28 – correct typographical error (be to by) and change the decision of the arbitrator from advisory to binding on the parties – *Withdraw*

-Discussion items:- *Come back to at a later time*

1. Can better 403B options be explored
2. The athletic pass earned by taking tickets should still be for the employee + 1
3. Reminder about: Article IX. Teacher Benefits, Section 6. Annual Coverage, p. 18

School Board Review and Counter Proposal (Anderson)

Anderson noted that they are closely aligned and is hopeful they can find common ground to move forward. The board had discussions and are willing to drop all seven proposals for this negotiation session. In addition, the board proposes a one-time $500 cash bonus to all teachers who have stepped out of the pay matrix, paid in September. Tied to the proposal, we will agree on the formation of a joint committee that VCEA to study the information that was mentioned earlier, a new pay matrix, extra-curriculars, and teacher workload. Anderson acknowledged that it is far less than what was asked for, however, the budget is at 12.3% carry over and we have not made adjustments for admin salaries, special education, and VoTec, etc.

-VCEA requested a caucus at this time – 7:22 AM (approx. 15 mins)
-Caucus ended at – 7:38 AM

-VCEA rejected the $500 one-time payment. VCEA said they would like to see money on the base, that is important.

-Dockter suggested not getting the Bobcat and the bus this year and use those funds for teacher salaries. Anderson indicted we may not, but at some point, we do have to plan for those items.

-Anderson acknowledged that he would be put off by $500 too, and this is not easy to do.

-Murray responded they are sticking to the counter proposal. Anderson said, that is why we want to get the base figured out next year.

-Anderson reviewed a very simplified budget that already includes the teacher steps – for those who have not stepped out. He showed we would be at 12.37% carry over with the $500 cash bonus and we do not want to go below 12%. Anderson mentioned he doesn't know where the money is going to come from.

-Anderson mentioned that the overall compensation for all teachers is a problem in Bismarck and they are willing to go to Bismarck and let them know they need to step up to the plate. They can't expect school districts to keep paying good teachers and staff and everything on a 2% increase. Anderson noted that on total compensation we are still ranked at the top in the state, we are fifth.

-Powers noted they still have the right and opportunity to say they want more.
-Murray noted when he was hired 15 years ago, Valley City was number one on the pay.

-Anderson responded we don't have some of the resources that those other districts have access to – oil money and federal money.

-Anderson reviewed another Power Point slide which shows Valley City total compensation compared to like size schools in Class A – it shows are approx. $20K more. It is also noted that, at this time, we have veteran staff.
-Anderson wished he had better news for teachers; he was sorry that he doesn't know what to do.
-Lerud said she was glad the board moved off of zero for an increase; Anderson responded saying would this have been any better? Lerud said, better than zero.

-Anderson said looking back, we should have come at $500 right way, it would have been less insulting, and they probably took the wrong approach.

-Powers thanked Anderson for recognizing that.

-Anderson noted that $500 is $500 and it is just as insulting for the board – he mentioned that teachers are friends, you teach our children and it sucks to have to offer $500.00, and he knows that they would like other things; however, it is not feasible, but if there is something a little higher than $500 they are willing to look at it.

-Murray said they were offered a stipend three years ago and they were not interested at that time either.

-The board will review the language changes proposed by VCEA and discuss at the next meeting.

We will meet Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 7 AM.

-Horsager mentioned that she will clarify on the military leave.

Next meeting agenda:

1. Approval of the May 21, 2026, meeting minutes.
2. Continuation of Counter Proposals & Discussion

Next Meetings Date/Time:

- Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Adjournment:
- Time: 7:52 AM

Date: 06-04-26

SCHOOL BOARD

Sheri Horsager
Valley City School Board Lead Negotiator

TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Sarah E. Lenz
VCEA Lead Negotiator